

COASTAL AND ESTUARINE LAND CONSERVATION PROGRAM
Request for Proposals -- FFY 2008 Funding
New Hampshire Coastal Program (NHCP)

Background:

In 2002, Senator Judd Gregg, in coordination with state and federal land conservation experts, established the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP). CELCP was created “for the purpose of protecting important coastal and estuarine areas that have significant conservation, recreation, ecological, historical, or aesthetic values, or that are threatened by conversion from their natural or recreational state to other uses,” giving priority to lands that can be effectively managed and protected and that have significant ecological value.

To date, funds for the program have been exclusively allocated through the congressional appropriations process (earmarks). However, the Commerce Committee language in the 2006 and 2007 appropriations bills call for the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to create a national priority list for CELCP appropriations. The Request for Proposals (RFP) is intended to provide information to NOAA on the projects that are available for funding in New Hampshire’s coastal watershed for FFY 2008 (see watershed map at <http://www.des.nh.gov/coastal/documents/NhCoastalZoneMap.pdf>). As a result of this RFP, the NHCP will forward to NOAA three projects requesting no more than \$3 million per project.

The New Hampshire Coastal Program (NHCP) has a partnership with the N.H. Estuaries Project, Society for the Protection of N.H. Forests, The Nature Conservancy, and the Strafford and Rockingham regional planning commissions to create a NHCELCP plan and process that will be used to identify projects eligible for CELCP funding. As this RFP is released, the NHCELCP Plan is in final review. The draft NHCELCP Plan will be used as a guide for funding decisions but will not be approved before these applications are due. That plan can be found at <http://www.des.nh.gov/coastal/CoastalEstuarine.html> after September 8, 2006.

RFP Process:

This RFP is on a short timeline due to the short timeframe required by NOAA to create the national priority list for FFY 2008 funding. NOAA announced on August 29, 2006 that the state prioritized lists are due on October 27, 2006. NHCP is the state lead agency for CELCP and is “responsible for: soliciting projects that are consistent with priorities outlined in the state’s plan, reviewing them for completeness, prioritizing them according to state criteria, and nominating projects to the national selection process.” The NHCP will use the following process to select projects for FFY 2008 funding. Below is a summary of that process:

- 1) RFP is released – August 31, 2006.
- 2) Proposals are due back to the NHCP – **October 10, 2006.**
- 3) NHCP will use the draft NOAA scoring criteria (attached) for a preliminary ranking of the proposals – October 10 – October 17, 2006.
- 4) All interested parties are invited to participate in a meeting to discuss the preliminary ranking and attempt to reach consensus on a final ranking – October 19, 2006.
- 5) Priority project proposals will be polished up and sent to NOAA -- October 27, 2006.
- 6) NOAA will allow for technical issues to be worked out in applications -- November 2006.
- 7) NOAA sends national priority projects to congress – March 2007.
- 8) Congress approves FFY 2008 projects – Fall 2007.

- 9) Funding available for successful projects – May 2008.
- 10) CELCP funding must be complete – Dec. 2010

Project Requirements:

CELCP funds may be used for:

- Acquisition of properties or interests in properties from willing sellers, provided that the terms and conditions will ensure that the property will be administered for conservation in perpetuity, including direct expenses relating to the acquisition of lands and interests in lands acquired under the authority of the CELCP; and/or
- Certain initial costs for land stewardship, not to exceed 5 percent of the award and not to exceed three years or the duration of award period, to allow for signage, public safety, or other stewardship purposes.

All proposed CECLP projects must:

- be located in a coastal or estuarine area included within a state's approved coastal and estuarine land conservation plan (see coastal watershed map <http://www.des.nh.gov/coastal/documents/NhCoastalZoneMap.pdf>);
- match federal funds with nonfederal funds at a ratio of 1:1;
- be held in public ownership and provide conservation in perpetuity;
- provide for access to the general public, or other public benefit, as appropriate and consistent with resource protection;
- be consistent with the state's coastal management program approved under the Coastal Zone Management Act.

Project Readiness:

We expect that proposals will be submitted for projects that are well-along in their development.

Recognizing that projects can be in various stages of development and that funding from this cycle will not be available until May 2008, projects should be as specific as possible. At the very least, proposals should be for specific tracts of land and land-owners should have been contacted about their willingness to sell. By May 2008, the applicant should be in a position to submit documentation that the current owner is a willing participant in a process of negotiation for possible sale of property, or interests in property, for conservation purposes. This documentation may be in the form of a letter of willingness or intent, option letter, contract, or other similar form.

CELCP Goals:

- Protects important coastal and estuarine areas that have significant conservation, recreation, ecological, historical, or aesthetic values, or that are threatened by conversion from their natural or recreational state to other uses;
- Gives priority to lands which can be effectively managed and protected and that have significant ecological value.

The CELCP goals and project criteria can be found in detail at the following link:

<http://coastalmanagement.noaa.gov/land/welcome.html>

All the materials for the NHCELCP process may be found at:

<http://www.des.nh.gov/coastal/CoastalEstuarine.html>

Application Requirements:

The applicant must be a qualified entity, which is an eligible state or local unit of government. Applicants should submit separate complete proposals for each individual project. There is no limit to the number of project proposals an applicant can submit. In your proposal, please address the following (the complete federal CELCP requirements can be found in Appendix A):

REQUIRED ELEMENTS

- (1) Project Description/Scope of Work. The following information should be provided for the project site and any parcel that is to be used as match.
- The project description/scope of work should include information on the project site's size, location and relationship to coastal or estuarine features, environmental significance, the legal rights to be acquired, and any conversion threats to the property.
 - The project description should specify: the primary purpose of the project (i.e., ecological, conservation, recreation, aesthetic, or historic); how the proposed project meets the state and national criteria and its expected benefits in terms of coastal and estuarine land conservation; what pre-existing uses are on the property and the nature of those uses; what type of activities are planned for the project site and how the activities are consistent with the long-term protection of the site's ecological or other values.
 - The project description should also describe a strategy for long-term stewardship, including information on how maintenance and enforcement against illegal uses will be supported.
 - The project description should specify a proposed award period for the grant, and include a project timeline with discrete benchmarks for completing the project within the requested award period.
 - The project description/scope of work should also include photographs (2-15) of the project site that document the values described in the text.

Applicants are required to use the template for the Scope of Work in Appendix B of this announcement.

(2) Project Budget and Justification of Proposed Costs. The project budget should include a breakdown of project costs and justification. See the required template in Appendix C of this announcement. Land acquisition costs should be based on appraised value or other estimate of fair market value. See Section III of the federal announcement (Appendix A). The project budget should also specify whether this project has been submitted in application for other sources of federal funding, and if, so which federal program(s) and year(s). The NHCP may add up to 1% of the requested amount for CELCP program administrative costs.

Applicants are required to use the template for the project budget in Appendix C of this announcement.

(3) Project Checklist. The project checklist supports NOAA in complying with requirements under NEPA and includes questions that will enable NOAA to determine if a project may have any adverse impacts and whether additional information maybe required to satisfy the requirements of applicable federal laws, regulations or policies. The project checklist can be found in the Funding Opportunities section of the CELCP website at http://coastalmanagement.noaa.gov/land/celcp_fundingop.html and in Appendix D of this announcement.

(4) Project Location and Site Maps. Two maps should be submitted: (1) A regional map showing the general location of the project and; (2) A map of the project site, showing the location and extent of

the proposed acquisition and its relationship to significant natural features as well as adjacent land uses.

SUPPLEMENTAL ELEMENTS

The supplemental elements are not required with this proposal, but if the project is selected and funded, these elements and other forms would be required at the time a grant application is submitted to NOAA or before grant funds can be released (see Appendix A). Note that while these are not required for application, their inclusion may result in a higher scoring proposal.

- (1) Documentation of Willingness or Intent to Sell. If available, the applicant should submit documentation of any option agreement, signed contract, or letter documenting that a seller is willing to consider or has accepted an offer to purchase, as described in Section 4.2.f. of the CELCP guidelines.
- (2) Appraisal. If available, the applicant should submit a self-contained appraisal documenting the cost of the property. The appraisal must be developed in accordance with the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice, which can be found on the internet at http://www.appraisalfoundation.org/s_appraisal/sec.asp?CID=3&DID=3 and the Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisition ("Yellow Book"), which can be found on the internet at <http://www.usdoj.gov/enrd/land-ack/>.
- (3) Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement. (optional) If available, the applicant should submit any environmental assessment or environmental impact statement that has been done for the project site.
- (4) Site Survey/Plat Map. If available, the applicant should submit a survey plat of the project site.
- (5) Evidence of Title. If available, the applicant should submit documentation that shows that the seller is the legal owner of the property and identifies any easements or other encumbrances on the property to be acquired. Examples of such documentation include an attorney title opinion or property report from a title insurance company.

Please submit project proposals to:

Ted Diers
NH Coastal Program, DES
50 International Drive, Suite 200
Portsmouth, NH 03801

You may also email your proposals to tdiers@des.state.nh.us or fax them to 559-1510.

The due date for all proposals is 4:00 p.m. on October 10, 2006.

The meeting date to discuss the proposals is October 19 at 9 a.m. at the DES Pease Field Office in Portsmouth. See http://www.des.nh.gov/map_to_Pease.jpg for directions. We intend for the meeting to conclude by noon.

If you have questions about this RFP, please email those questions to tdiers@des.state.nh.us by September 27, 2006. We will respond to emails as we get them and then compile all the questions and provide responses to all interested parties by September 29, 2006.